

Message Text

PAGE 01 STATE 061240
ORIGIN PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00
INRE-00 ERDA-05 CIAE-00 H-01 INR-07 IO-13 L-03
NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
TRSE-00 DODE-00 NSC-05 ACDA-07 /080 R

DRAFTED BY PM:LFUERTH:KB

APPROVED BY PM: LGELB

EUR/SOV:MARK GARRISON

S/S :S.STEINER

S/S :S.STEINER

-----190344Z 000541 /61

O 190214Z MAR 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 061240

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, UR

SUBJECT: MEMCON BETWEEN LESLIE GELB, PM AND ALEXANDER
BESSMERTNYKH, MINISTER-COUNSELOR, SOVIET EMBASSY
ON ARMS CONTROL MATTERS

1. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: SINCE 1972, WE HAVE HAD DISCUSSIONS
BETWEEN OURSELVES REGARDING CHEMICAL WEAPONS. IN 1974
WE CAME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT WE SHOULD BE JOINT
INITIATORS IN THIS AREA, AND IN 1976, WE AGREED TO
BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WANTS TO
BEGIN MORE (CONCRETE DISCUSSIONS. WE PROPOSE TO START
NEGOTIATIONS TO WORK OUT THE BASICS OF FUTURE AGREEMENTS
FOR A BAN ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS. THESE NEGOTIATIONS COULD
BEGIN IN APRIL, AT THE LEVEL OF OUR REPRESENTATIVES IN
GENEVA. THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT IS PREPARED FOR FURTHER WORK
EITHER IN MOSCOW OR IN WASHINGTON TO CONDUCT NEGOTIATIONS.
I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO GIVE YOU A PROPOSAL FROM GROMYKO
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 061240

(HANDS COPIES TO GELB AND GLASSMAN).

2. MR. GELB: I WILL GET BACK TO YOU WITH AN ANSWER

3. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT BELIEVES THAT
WE COULD ACTUALLY BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS RATHER THAN START
AGAIN AT THE LEVEL OF TECHNICAL EXPERTS. CONFIRMATION
OF THE ADVISABILITY OF HAVING A JOINT INITIATIVE WOULD BE A
GOOD THING. IT IS UNDER CONSIDERATION IN MOSCOW. THE
GROMYKO PROPOSAL ANSWERS THE US PROPOSAL IN THE CCD.

4. I AM REPLACING VORONTSOV, WHO WILL BE LEAVING MARCH 8. HE HAS THE RANK OF AMBASSADOR, IS A MEMBER OF THE COLLEGIUM OF MINISTERS AND A DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE PLANNING DEPARTMENT.

5. SOME DISCUSSION FOLLOWS CONCERNING BESSMERTNYKH'S INTEREST IN THE DIVIDING LINES BETWEEN ACDA AND STATE IN THE NEW ADMINISTRATION. CONVERSATION THEN RETURNED TO SUBSTANCE.

6. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: WHEN WILL YOU BE IN A POSITION TO GIVE US A RESPONSE? PERHAPS BY MID-MARCH?

7. MR. GELB: THAT SOUNDS REASONABLE. I LIKE THE IDEA OF MUTUAL INITIATIVES. SPEAKING PERSONALLY, HOWEVER, WE EXPECT THE SOVIET UNION TO COME FORWARD WITH PROPOSALS.

8. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: IT HAS NEVER BEEN ONE SIDED. THERE IS JOINT INTEREST. WE WISH TO DO THINGS TOGETHER. WE HAVE QUITE SIMILAR INTERESTS IN CERTAIN AREAS: NON-PROLIFERATION AND NUCLEAR EXPORTS AGREEMENTS, FOR EXAMPLE. WE ARE INTERESTED IN THE PRESIDENT'S IDEAS ON SALT, INCLUDING THE LONG-RANGE IDEAS ABOUT REDUCTIONS AND LESS DEPENDENCE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS. ON THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF SALT, HOWEVER, CRUISE MISSILES AND BACKFIRE
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 061240

ARE HOLDOVERS FROM THE PREVIOUS ADMINISTRATION. WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION: NOT TO REPEAT WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN REJECTED.

9. MR. GELB: THIS IS ONE OF THOSE AREAS WHERE A MUTUAL INITIATIVE WOULD BE USEFUL.

10. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: YES. WE ARE PREPARED TO START IMMEDIATELY ON SALT III NEGOTIATIONS...

11. MR. GELB: LOOKING TOWARDS REDUCTIONS AND QUALITATIVE CONTROLS...

12. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: YES. WE ARE PREPARED TO TALK. BUT SALT II SHOULD BE BASED ON WHAT BOTH SIDES HAVE ALREADY DONE THROUGH THE TURMOIL OF MANY YEARS. WE HAVE ACHIEVED A FRAMEWORK AT VLADIVOSTOK. WE ARE NOT AGAINST TALKING ABOUT THE BIG THINGS, BUT WE WANT TO KEEP SALT II IN FIRST POSITION.

13. MR. GELB: MAYBE WE COULD DO SOMEWHAT BETTER EVEN NOW, RATHER THAN PUT OFF ALL THESE MATTERS TO SALT III.

14. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: YES...BUT KEEPING THE VLADIVOSTOK

FRAMEWORK.

15. MR. GELB: WHAT DO YOU VIEW AS UNALTERABLE IN THAT FRAMEWORK?

16. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: LEVELS. CRUISE MISSILES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE AGREEMENT...

17. MR. GELB: STILL SPEAKING PERSONALLY, WE HAVE OF COURSE SET THE LEVELS IN VLADIVOSTOK AT 2400/1300. WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE TO REDUCE BY A LITTLE BIT, WITHOUT GROSSLY CHANGING VLADIVOSTOK, AS A DEMONSTRATION OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 061240

DIRECTION FOR SALT III?

18. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: WE NEED TO DISCUSS SUCH THINGS ON A PRACTICAL LEVEL. HOW MUCH OF A CHANGE? REDUCING ICBMS, FOR EXAMPLE, IS DIFFERENT FROM REDUCING MIRVS. IF YOU WITHDRAW ONE ELEMENT, YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT THERE ARE INTER-RELATIONSHIPS: FBS, THE GENERAL LEVEL OF ICBMS, CRUISE MISSILES. YOU CAN'T DO IT IN A SIMPLE WAY. IT IS SUCH A CANVAS THAT YOU CAN'T PULL A THREAD WITHOUT DESTROYING THE WHOLE THING.

19. MR. GELB: ...BUT MAYBE WE COULD REPLACE ONE THREAD WITH ANOTHER.

-

20. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: I, TOO, AM SPEAKING PERSONALLY. YOU KNOW, AT TIMES, I HAVE THOUGHT THAT IT IS PERHAPS NOT GOOD TO HAVE THE WHOLE LEVEL OF US-SOVIET RELATIONS BASED ON SALT. IT IS OF COURSE CENTRAL, BUT SALT IS EXPECTEDLY BECOMING MORE DIFFICULT. WE SHOULD EVALUATE THE GENERAL LEVEL OF OUR RELATIONS: A CUMULATIVE APPRAISAL. WE HAVE VERY GOOD SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL EXCHANGES, MANY THINGS GOING ON BETWEEN US. SALT IS PRACTICALLY DIFFICULT. IT TOUCHES THE NERVOUS SYSTEMS OF MILITARY SYSTEMS ON BOTH SIDES--BUT OF COURSE, IT DOES GENERATE GOOD FEELING AND TRUST.

21. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: EVEN NOW IN MOSCOW SOME THINK THAT THE RELATIONSHIP HAS STOPPED BECAUSE SALT HAS BEEN SUSPENDED. I ARGUE AGAINST SUCH VIEWS. IN THE US, THE PRESS IS NEWS ORIENTED, NOT FACT ORIENTED. THEY INTERPRET LACK OF PROGRESS IN SALT AS STAGNATION IN OUR GENERAL RELATIONSHIP. THINGS ARE GOING ON, HOWEVER.

22. MR. GELB: I AGREE THAT IT IS GOOD TO LOOK AT THINGS GOING ON IN TERMS OF THEIR OWN MERITS. BUT SALT IS A DRAMATIC THING: IT IS POLITICALLY OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 061240

IN BOTH COUNTRIES.

23. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: I HOPE THE MARCH TALKS WILL BE PRODUCTIVE.

24. MR. GELB: ANOTHER AREA WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT IS WEAPONS TRANSFERS. IT'S AN IMPORTANT MATTER. HAVE YOU DONE ANY PERSONAL THINKING?

25. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: ONLY ON A VERY GENERAL BASIS. IT IS IMPORTANT, I AGREE. BUT IT DEPENDS ON WHERE: THE LOCALITIES. COMPARATIVELY, THE USSR IS FAR BEHIND THE US AS A SUPPLIER. THE GEOGRAPHIC FACTOR IS IMPORTANT...THE MID AND NEAR EAST. WE HAVE ALREADY HAD SOME EXCHANGES ABOUT THIS. THEY MAY GO BETTER WHEN THE SITUATION HAS CALMED DOWN.

26. MR. GELB: I AM INTERESTED IN THIS AREA.

27. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY THINK IN MOSCOW, BUT YOU ARE A MAJOR SUPPLIER. YOUR INITIATIVE WOULD BE WELCOME. ARE YOU THINKING OF BILATERAL PRELIMINARY TALKS? OR SUPPLIERS IN GENERAL?

28. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: THE SALT AND VIENNA TALKS ARE THE MOST PRESSING AT THE MOMENT IN ANY EVENT. THERE IS NO PRACTICAL PROPOSAL ON WEAPONS TRANSFERS.

29. MR. GELB: WE ARE THINKING ABOUT HOW TO DO THIS. IT WOULD BE USEFUL IF SOVIET EXPERTS WERE TO THINK ABOUT IT. WE NEED A COMMON KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT THE PROBLEM IS. THE US, FOR EXAMPLE, PUBLISHES EVERY ARMS TRANSACTION IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL. ONE WAY TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM IS TO HAVE COMMON AWARENESS OF WHAT ARMS ARE GOING WHERE, AS A BASE.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 06 STATE 061240

30. MR. BESSMERTNYKH: THAT SOUNDS REASONABLE, BUT I AGREE WITH THE ANCIENT GREEKS THAT WE SHOULD START WITH DEFINITIONS...WITH MORE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS.
VANCE

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 22-Sep-1999 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TEXT, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, ARMS CONTROL MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 19-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE061240
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: PM:LFUERTH:KB
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: D770094-0413
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197703111/baaaevly.tel
Line Count: 212
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 82a401b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21-Oct-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2964988
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEMCON BETWEEN LESLIE GELB, PM AND ALEXANDER BESSMERTNYKH, MINISTER-COUNSELOR, SOVIET EMBASSY ON
ARMS CONTROL MATTERS
TAGS: PFOR, PARM, UR, US, (GELB, LESLIE), (BESSMERTNYKH, ALEXANDER)
To: MOSCOW
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/82a401b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009